A new look into an old world

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A new look into an old world

by orphan_account

Summary

Hannibal and Will have a comfortable life in Cuba together. They've already spent months recovering from physical and mental wounds, learning each other's boundaries the easy and hard way, and getting used to living or even wanting a domestic life with each other.
They are lovers now, though Will was reluctant to label it at first and Hannibal visibly grimaced when Will jokingly refered to him as; "his boyfriend".

They share a bedroom, their schedules work around the other and they've grown very comfortable with each other.

Part of their schedule was the unspoken rule that they share three meals a day together, be it in silence or with their usual back and forth banter.

It was rather unfortunate that only Will and Hannibal knew of this routine and its rules.

OR Will Graham has DID because yes. And Hannibal deals with it.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Hannibal and Will had a comfortable life in Cuba together. They've already spent months recovering from physical and mental wounds, learning each other's boundaries the easy and hard way, and getting used to living or even wanting a domestic life with each other.
They are lovers now, though Will was reluctant to label it at first and Hannibal visibly grimaced when Will jokingly refered to him as; "his boyfriend". They share a bedroom, their schedules work around the other and they've grown very comfortable with each other.
Part of their schedule was the unspoken rule that they share three meals a day together, be it in silence or with their usual back and forth banter.

Neither ever explicitly said anything about it, and there's no set hour for any meal, and yet they've fallen into a routine.

Hannibal would start on the meal, and at some point during the process Will would be drawn out of whatever he was doing (usually indulging in any of his beloved hobbies, which sometimes means he's out fishing and it takes him slightly longer to arrive) to set the table. If Will was already there or they had time to spare before the meal is fully finished, he would lean on an outer counter and start their banter early.

Now this isn't always true, many of the details change each time. The only set behaviors are: They eat together three times a day, Hannibal makes the meals, Will naturally joins Hannibal without being called, and Will never steps into the kitchen or anywhere in Hannibal's way lest he disturb the feeling of utter peace the preparations grant his lover.

It was rather unfortunate that only Will and Hannibal knew of this routine and its rules.

Especially when Will sits in their shared bedroom and fully dissociates for the first time in much, much too long.

In his stead? Liam. A slightly younger man who holds much of the body's social anxiety symptoms. He knows Will and was aware of what was factually happening to him, as he had fronted before several times, but...

He had no clue how long ago that was, or anything about what was currently happening, where he was, you name it.

The easiest thing to deduce was: he's missed quite a bit. The body has newly healed wounds that will most definitely scar, Liam cringes as he stares at a mirror and traces a hand along the left side of his face. His beard always grew in patches, but hair seems to refuse to grow on any part of the pink, mutilated skin.

He's also in a shower room, with only a towel wrapped around his hips.

That, he is used to. He's pretty sure showers just cause the others to dissociate easily because this is a very common way for him to wake up in the body.

Now, Liam prefers his face clean shaven because it makes him look younger, and thus, more around the age he's used to being. But he's very easily grossed out by anything related to sickness, injury and hospitals and he'd rather die than touch his cheek again.
Also, he's not sure if he's supposed to have a razor anywhere near the wound anyway.

Probably, because his beard isn't too long and the skin must've taken a while to heal.

Still, he'd rather not.

Liam makes a point not to glance at his chest because he knows more mutilated skin is waiting there, he can feel the soreness of his already problematic shoulder and he knows it's not just because of the extortion of taking a shower.

Liam isn't too up to date with whatever happened to the body while he was away, but he heard some gossip, he knows they've moved a bunch of times since their quiet life in Wolf Trap, but the shower room he's in looks a lot fancier than the kind of house he or Will would choose to live in.

He exists the room in search of clothes or any indication he lives where he just showered, worried he just took charge while at a friend's....uh, acquaintance's place?

In any case, not a good time for him to have gaps in memory. He needs to at least gather as much information as he can if he hopes to sell the act that he's Will Graham.

He's in a bedroom that looks inhabited by two...good start.

He looks through drawers in a white closet, closest to the bathroom door and finds some uncomfortable, too fancy clothes with his legal initials and pushes them to the side. He finds a pair of boxers and slacks and resigns himself to wear them.

He looks through a second closet on the other side of the room and finds clothes of the same stuffy quality, but he manages to find a red sweater that fits his style a lot more than anything else and slips it on.

He then backtracks when he realizes he's probably supposed to wear a tshirt or something underneath, and looks through the first closet for one.

Alright! Clothes, check.
That's a good start.

Should he have checked the initials in the second closet? If they're different from the first then that means he's sharing a house with a romantic partner.

Liam...is really hoping he's not about to ruin Will's relationship by being an ignorant dick to his partner.

Oh, god, what is he even supposed to say to them? Is he supposed to hug them? Are they physically intimate?
They share a bed and they live together, so probably?

Liam doesn't really like touch all that much, but he's willing to put up with it for as long as it takes until he can convince their kind gatekeeper to let Will back in the game.

'He needs a break', Liam hears said gatekeeper comment.

'A break? And he was chosen to replace Will?
Oh, wonderful! Who knows how long it'll be until he's back.'

Liam was startled out of his complaints by a gentle knock on the door.

"Will? I've prepared lunch, did you fall asleep?"

Oh god-

"I'm fine, I'll join you in a minute!"

He doesn't get a reply and he feels like the person left, but he didn't hear any footsteps.

Strange.

Liam turns the knob and peaks into an L shaped hallway, no other humans around.

Huh.

There's a few closed doors and a window with its blinds down, so the most light is streaming from a longer hallway that Liam can safely assume leads to the kitchen if the delicious smell is anything to go by.

Liam walks slowly towards the end of the hall and inhales deeply, preparing himself.

I am Will Graham. I am going to have lunch with my partner, whom I love. Romantically. I am going to make light conversation, smile and make eye contact. I am not going to ask any unnecessary questions but I will act engaged in any story they might tell me.

Liam exhales slowly and takes the last few steps-

Oh, oh, there's two dogs running towards him! Will loves dogs, this will be easy!

He crouches down and pets them gently, murmuring praises.

There's one big, fluffy, brown dog with white patches that seems to be missing an eye. It licks his foot then runs off somewhere.

Then there's a small, black dog with thin fur that's sniffing at his hand curiously, and Liam grows more anxious.

Can dogs detect things like personality switches? He doesn't think they're supposed to-

"Ripper." The same voice from before calls and Liam jumps. 'Ripper' the dog wags its tail so hard its lower body moves with the motion. Or at least, the muscle from the tail bone where Ripper's tail should be does the wagging.

Liam looks up when Ripper runs off and sees the supposed partner placing two dog bowls on the floor. Oh, that's where the other dog went.

Oh, right, they're having lunch.

Wait who names their dog Ripper?

Liam is not sure if that was his thought or not, but he agrees with the absurdity.

He stands up and surveys the dining table as he takes a sit, followed by the partner-

'Hannibal.'

Oh, that's better, thank you.

Wait who names their kid Hannibal?

Now that was definitely Liam's question.

Hannibal describes the food he's prepared and says some name Liam doesn't understand for something he's pretty sure is just rice with meat and some other additions, but he really shouldn't be surprised someone with a name like that would make everything sound more important than it is.

Drama queen.

Hannibal seems to be waiting for Liam to take the first bite, he's preoccupied with cataloging his features so it takes him a moment longer than he would've liked to realize this.

After that, lunch goes pretty smoothly.

Well, Liam's mind is riddled with questions about this older, scarred man who seems to feel so at ease around someone like Will Graham; the weird hermit no one ever likes other than the people he shares a head with.

And people who want to use him for whatever reason.

'Just how much did I miss?' , Thinks Liam, 'Is Will likeable now or did someone else take his place as host and I just didn't know?'

"Where has your mind gone to, dear Will?"

Oh, ok, conversation. Lower your fork, make sure your mouth is empty, smile and make eye contact.

"Ah, nowhere important, really."

Well his smile is awkward and he failed at eye contact, but that's a start.

Hannibal hums, cutting the...type of meat on his plate. "You were in there for quite a while, I was getting worried you fell asleep."

In the shower, not now. He hopefully picked up on the context clues correctly.

"No, I...got distracted."

"Anything you'd like to bring to the table?" Hannibal said before taking a bite.

"Uh," What does Will talk about? Dogs, boats? That's not shower thoughts or very distracting, if you ask Liam. "I can't remember."

Technically not a lie.

"Are you quite alright?"

Liam dismissed his concern with a wave of his hand, which quickly turned into him just shaking his hand from side to side to calm himself. He shoved his hand under the table.

"I'm fine, I'm fine, just...random nerves."

Half truths. That's a good way to get out of this without being a horrible partner.

"Hm. Perhaps we should cancel the trip to that pet shelter you mentioned, to save you the stress." Hannibal says, and his tone sounds different. Or maybe that's just what he normally sounds like when he eats, or talks, or...

Oh, if there's one thing Liam can do right, it's appreciate dogs! Well, not really, he's more of a cat person, but he still appreciates the opportunity Hannibal unknowingly gave him.

"No, no, i still want to go. Don't worry." Liam said, happily stuffing his mouth with good rice.

Hannibal placed his utensils down on a napkin.

"Will, if it's something important I'm not aware of, I'd prefer to be informed. Has the encephalitis returned?"

The...the what.
Wait, how did Liam mess up with that answer? Did he miss some cue or something?

Hannibal continued: "Is our safety in danger? I can only help if I know. And we had an agreement that if it was serious, I would know."

Why would their safety be in danger?

Liam's anxiety rises, how's he going to get out of this now? How did he mess up talking about dogs?! This guy can read him in a way he strongly envies.

"I'm just- nervous alright? I told you, it's random nerves, I don't know- like, why, I'm just nervous."

If there was ever any chance he'd make eye contact, it is gone now. He stares at his hands as he fidgets and wonders how someone could mess up this bad in five minutes.

'I wasn't built for this, you should've assigned someone else, G.'
Liam thinks bitterly, he doesn't get a response.

Hannibal places his hand on top of Liam's, and he only slightly flinches. It could hopefully be seen as a nervous tic.

"Would you allow me to help relieve your nerves? You know about my dabble in work on the human body and mind. I've learned quite a bit about relieving tension from muscles. I think it would be beneficial for you."

Liam really...wasn't expecting that. Apparently whoever decided to date this Hannibal guy has a thing for people who can work with their hands.

"That..sounds nice, but you really don't have to, I'm fine."

Hannibal's smile is light, but fond. "It is of no issue for me, dear boy. You know I enjoy taking care of you."

He does? How did they find this guy? This sounds like some weird fantasy, where's the catch?

"Thank you." Liam says, having a hard time processing this series of events.

"I do it for my own enjoyment as well, of course, there's no need to thank me. Now finish your meal."

Liam smiles at his plate, maybe this isn't so bad after all.

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And that's how Liam found himself Infront of the shower mirror again, only wearing a towel. He was instructed to go out with just that to the bedroom and then lay down and let Hannibal take care of everything.

Realistically, he knows Hannibal has probably seen more of the body than Liam is physically able to, and he's probably intimate with his injuries, but that doesn't make him any less weirded out by the idea of being so vulnerable Infront of a complete stranger.

He knows Hannibal can be trusted, he knows there's mutual love and trust and respect and all but it's not his.
He doesn't feel it, he only knows it exists.

Liam takes a deep breath in, then exhales.

It's fine. Even if he's a nervous wreck who can't stop fidgeting for two seconds, even if he'll be practically naked and at the mercy of someone without a problematic shoulder, even if he won't be able to properly fight back if he lies on his stomach-

It's not fine, it's not fine- oh god, what has he agreed to? Why can't he just be ok with this like his counterpart is?

Hannibal is waiting, Liam knows that's true and he still can't quieten his anxiety.

'G? G, send someone else. I can't do this, I can't breathe!'

'Lia-'

Hannibal abruptly opens the door, wide eyed.

"Will. Will, i need you to breathe."

How did he know?

The confusion grounds him just a bit, but then he makes eye contact with Hannibal and sees so much concern and love for someone he can never be, and the dam breaks.

Liam hides his face in his hand as a sob wracks his body. He tries to grip the sink with the other hand to steady himself but his knees buckle and he just ends up crying pathetically on the floor of an unfamiliar bathroom.

Great, you've just made everything worse!

Warm arms circle him slowly and gently, giving him time to signal for them to stop.

He doesn't. He feels like he's missing a warmth he's never had and it hurts.

"Breathe, mylimasis."

And he sounds so caring and Liam wants to please him by breathing but;
"I- I can't-"

"Shh," Hannibal says, "focus on breathing. I'm right here, my one."

He tries, it takes some minutes and a lot of frustration but he manages to mimic the other's breathing and calm himself.

He's left with the embarrassment of having a panic attack like some teenager.

"I'm sorry." Liam says, reluctantly removing himself from Hannibal's embrace.

Hannibal stares at him, still too fond. "Whatever for, my dear Will?"

And doesn't that hurt. All that compassion and he's still not sure how to tell Hannibal it's misdirected. That he can't mean it because he doesn't actually know who he's talking to.

"I've been- trying so hard to be Will for you, but I can't- I can't, I can't!"

It's scary how little of a physical reaction that granted Liam. Hannibal's hands made warm circles up and down Liam's arms, soothing him, and his face still looked open, supportive. He

thinks Hannibal would be good at poker.

"Who are you?" He asks like it's the most simple thing in the world for your boyfriend-husband? To suddenly claim he's not himself. But rather-

"I'm...Liam."

Hannibal smiles wide enough for his teeth to show, "It's a pleasure to meet you, Liam. I assume you already know me?"

"Not-", Liam wipes his eyes, "Not really. I only know your name and that we're..dating, I think? We share a house, I don't know much other than that."

"Would you like to discuss this over coffee? Or tea, whichever you prefer. Just perhaps not on the floor."

Just like that?

'I knew it would work out.' Said G.

'Thank you, you're still a cunt though', Liam complains, even as he smiles and lets Hannibal lead him towards the living room he ignored before.

'I accept the title. He's a good man for us.'

'Yeah, I can see that now. A bit too good if you ask me, is he secretly a creep or something? What's the catch?:

'He's a cannibal.'

Liam flinches, Hannibal notices and he feels inclined to dismiss any concerns.

"I'm fine! Just, uh..."

"May I ask who you're talking to?"

'What?' Says Liam.

G chuckles and reaches out his hand for a handshake. When he speaks his accent has a strange tilt to it. "Hello, my friend. It's a pleasure to see you again."

Hannibal beams, accepting the rough gesture. "Galahad? Agreed, it has been far too long. I take it you're still on guarding duty?"

"I enjoy it. It's unlike my old duties for the king, it's quiet and simple."

"Hm." Hannibal agrees, "I can imagine. No Romans or criminals around to disturb you."

"None other than you and Will, but the other fellas that don't bother me also have blood on their hands." Galahad says, spreading his legs and leaning his head on his arm.

"Now we know there's at least three pure spots in that head, not only dear Adam and Lee."

"Lord, do we need them."

Galahad and Hannibal share a laugh, meanwhile Liam just...stares. Awed.

Hannibal knew all along? Wait, what was that comment about cannibalism?

"I'll let you get back to duty. If you may, send the others my regards. Are you aware of how long Will's break will be this time around?"

"I may." Galahad says, sitting up with a sigh. "He's not asleep, surprisingly. You know how he usually was. He might pop in from time to time, but you should tell him something before he gets any ideas about that brain infection coming back."

"I'll make sure to do that, thank you."

And suddenly, Liam's feelings have an out.

"What...you knew?!" Liam demands, closing his legs as his posture tenses again.

"It didn't take too long to figure out. Galahad was kind enough to answer any questions I had at the time, as long as he had a full glass of beer for the duration of the conversation." Hannibal smiles, not unkind but mischievous.

'There's the catch', G joked.

"Wait, speaking of- What...What did G mean when he said you're a cannibal?"

"Exactly what you hear, dear boy. Will and I bond over our shared love for hunting food. Technically, you have consumed the same meat as I, even before our meal today."

'I think I'm gonna be sick,' says Liam.

'I don't support it, but he makes good food and it takes bad people out of this world.'

Liam, shocked beyond belief, gave a monotone goodbye: "I...I think I'd like to leave now. It was...interesting meeting you. I'm sorry about ruining your plans with Will for the evening, but, please don't contact me again."

"Understood." Hannibal says, though his voice sounds pleased and he seems to have a permanent fond smile on his face, "let me lead you to the shower room, where you can dissociate without any issues."

Then Liam is sitting on the edge of the tub and imagining the very long and painful conversation he's going to have to have with Will about his life choices, and with everyone else for allowing him to make those choices.

Maybe it's not the worst thing that he doesn't have a very active part in the body's life.

End Notes

Yeah, we hard projected onto Will, but there aren't nearly enough DID fics in this fandom!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!